

STOP THE VIRAL SPREAD

Research is clear. Adults cannot stop digital abuse, only young people can through collective action. But adults can empower kids to act- the purpose behind OSBF's **B4USend Video Challenge**. As you access the lesson plans, keep in mind the following "tips" to help kids stop the viral spread.

- Don't post anything you don't want your parents to see now or your future children to see later. Don't respond to what is sent to you. If you respond, you just open yourself up to trouble.
- Stay calm. Take a deep breath. Don't retaliate no matter how mean or obscene the message is. Bite your thumbs.
- Don't forward what is sent to you. Don't contribute to the "drama" of the peer group. Never share information about others that could hurt them or be used against them, even if you think it is just a "joke."
- Don't be a bully yourself. Think about how you would feel if you were on the receiving end of what you are about to do.
- Save the evidence coming your way. It can be shown to the proper adults if things do get out of hand.
- Block out the bad. Use privacy tools or preferences to keep your distance. If you're in a chat room when things go sour, leave.
- Gang up on bullies. With some friends tell them to stop. Let them know no one thinks they're funny. If they don't stop, at least stand by the victim, be a friend, and report the abuse.
- Stay above the fray. "Trash talking" also makes you an indecent one and opens you up to being bullied yourself.
- Seek out a trusted, knowing adult. A site administrator, parent, teacher, or counselor can help you shut down the sender of slime.
- Protect yourself. Never, ever give out passwords, account IDs or PINS to anyone (except parents and guardians), no matter how much they say they love you and never would hurt you. This kind of "love" can come back to haunt you. Resist the pressure by saying, "I share with no one." Hey, it's the truth then.
- Don't post on line any personal information that can be used to track you down or be used against you. Even sharing the name of your school and its mascot, in combination with other things you might post, can lead others to you.
- Don't open messages or attachments from strangers.
- Own your phone. Phone companies can tell you how to block unwanted numbers from calling or texting you. Why not use what you are paying for?
- Keep your friends close but keep your cell phone closer. Don't leave it out of your sight where others can use it against your will.

- Create a new identity. If you are still being harassed, change to a new online ID and email address. You can be in your own witness protection program.
- Trust your gut and think independently if you don't like what is happening to you. You're allowed to "log off" and "log out" of someone's life.
- File complaints. Internet Service Providers, web sites, email services, and cell phone companies can track down abusers, cancel their service, and report to the police, if necessary. Let an adult help you with this, again if necessary.
- Brainstorm techniques abusers use to bully and stalk. Recognize these methods so you don't fall prey to them.
- Practice zero tolerance. Don't put up with anything that makes you feel uncomfortable.
- Use conflict-resolution methods to address online conflicts. Kids still meet each other offline and need to know what to do.
- Engage students with activities to empower them not to become victims. Lectures don't usually work.